

Land Use

Introduction

LAND USE patterns in Coconino County have been shaped not only by **ZONING** and **SUBDIVISION** regulations, but also by physical factors such as topography and water availability. Land ownership, railroad lines, tourist attractions, and Native American reservations have also contributed to land use patterns. Future development will depend on factors such as population trends, employment growth, and water availability.

This Element reflects the overarching principles of the *Coconino County Comprehensive Plan*—it addresses existing and future land uses, characterizes the relationship between **CONSERVATION** and land use, and explores opportunities for creating conservation areas. Its purpose is not to restrict future growth but to manage it in a way that minimizes environmental impacts while offering residents a range of choices.

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The Conservation Framework Relationship

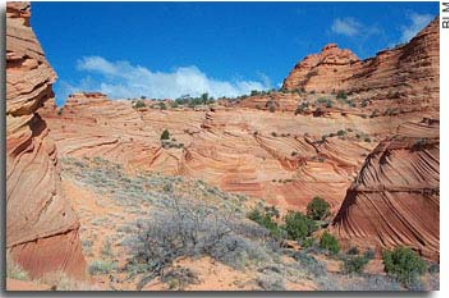
All land use decisions directly relate to the five ecological principles and eleven **CONSERVATION GUIDELINES** specified in the **CONSERVATION FRAMEWORK**. These principles and guidelines provide a concise list of criteria to consider when reviewing **DEVELOPMENT** plans, criteria that will help the County conserve resources and protect natural **ECOSYSTEMS**. The Conservation Framework’s principles and guidelines are important tools for ensuring that future land use decisions promote responsible growth.

Our Purpose & Vision

In our vision for Coconino County, we successfully accommodate growth and consciously decide how development should occur. We ensure the county’s long-term viability by using **INTEGRATED CONSERVATION DESIGN** methods, promoting **INFILL** development on vacant parcels, and providing incentives for quality subdivisions. Rather than relying on traditional “single-parcel” approaches, we incorporate well-designed, environmentally responsible, commercial and industrial development within communities and activity centers. This “mixed-use” approach not only helps create a range of employment opportunities and a stable economy, but it also helps us preserve open space and prevent fragmented landscapes

The policies in this Element ensure that new development follows available and planned infrastructure, utilities, and services, and that it is balanced with the available water supply. They also promote a range of housing types and retain public land as open space while making key parcels available for development.





CONSERVATION EASEMENT

A legal property interest or right granted by the landowner to another party to maintain or limit use of the land to conservation purposes, typically to maintain its natural state and preclude future development.

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

A transfer of the right to develop or build from one portion of a property to another portion, or from one property to another property.

Landscapes & Open Space

OPEN SPACE reflects primarily undeveloped land that provides scenic, ecological, or recreational values. In many instances, open space is set aside for resource protection or **CONSERVATION**; it may be managed as **FORESTLAND**, **RANGELAND**, or agricultural land. In other cases, land may be designated open space because it requires special management for hazards. Over three-fourths of the nonreservation land within Coconino County is managed by the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Arizona State Land Department. Virtually all these lands are open space. Most are heavily used by recreationists, especially Park Service and Forest Service lands. Not only are these lands used by local residents, but they also attract visitors from around the world. Other benefits of preserving our open space include protecting **WATERSHEDS** and water quality, minimizing **HABITAT FRAGMENTATION**, and enhancing our quality of life.

Open space can be preserved for conservation without being purchased in **FREE SIMPLE**. An example is the largest **CONSERVATION EASEMENT** in Arizona, which Babbitt Ranches granted to The Nature Conservancy and Coconino County. Approximately 40,880 acres of the private lands of Cataract Ranch (south of Grand Canyon National Park) will be permanently protected from mining, **SUBDIVISIONS**, and development. Conservation easements allow landowners to retain their property but limit development rights in perpetuity. In most cases, they are purchased for a portion of the land's fair market value, and a third party such as a government agency or a nonprofit land trust holds the easement. As of 2003, Coconino County did not have any nonprofit land trusts dedicated to preserving open space through conservation easement programs. The County will cooperate with nonprofit conservation organizations and land trusts to seek ways to acquire conservation easements.

Another method of protecting open space is allowing some portion of a landscape, rangeland, or ranch to be developed at a higher density to protect other portions. This is a form of **TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR)**. Other states permit TDR to different properties. These rights may be moved or purchased to protect an environmentally sensitive property while allowing higher density elsewhere on another property. Although this technique would likely require amending Arizona statutes, it may be a future option.

Goal: Ensure the preservation of open space.

Policies:

1. The County will work with landowners and agencies to protect open lands for the purposes of preserving scenic viewsheds, preventing the fragmentation of open lands, preserving important wildlife habitat, protecting watersheds, providing buffers between developed areas, and protecting environmentally sensitive lands. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINES: A, B, C, D, E, H*
2. Developers are encouraged to provide natural open space areas within new subdivisions. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: C*
3. The County supports use of public open space as a means to distinguish between individual communities.



4. When development of remote inholdings is considered, low-density residential character should be maintained. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: C*
5. Development projects within remote inholdings should be consistent with land management plans for surrounding lands, provide a full range of infrastructure and services, and not negatively affect landscape integrity and wildlife habitat. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINES: B, C, E*
6. Open-space zoning shall be maintained for public lands, and when such lands become private through purchase or exchange, zoning changes for future development shall be in conformance with the *Comprehensive Plan*, Area Plans, and other approved plans for adjacent public lands. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: B*

Ranches & Ranchlands

Virtually all the federal and state land in the county, except land under Park Service jurisdiction, is used for cattle grazing. In addition, about three-fourths of the county's private land consists of large ranches used almost exclusively for grazing cattle. Less prevalent uses include sheep, buffalo, llama, and ostrich ranching. Nine ranch owners with private land holdings exceeding 10,000 acres each collectively own 1.13 million acres—71 percent of the county's private land.⁶¹

Ensuring the quality of the county's expansive ranchlands is important. The vast landscapes of rural Coconino County are significant not only for their economic, visual, and historical values, but also because they contain large areas of contiguous **HABITAT**. Ranchers are the stewards of large tracts of private land. Protecting working ranches—assuming that they use environmentally appropriate range-management practices—is almost as important in preserving habitat as preserving federal and state lands. Grazing activity is rarely confined to privately owned ranchlands; rather, it extends to state and federal lands through state land leases and federal grazing allotments. Although the principal use of these lands is cattle grazing, other uses include recreation, mining or borrow pits, and logging.

While ranchlands are subject to the same planning and development regulations as other private properties in Coconino County, ranchers are offered an additional method for long-term planning of their property. Ranch owners can petition the **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS** to form a **RURAL PLANNING AREA**, which provides a means of developing incentives to preserve certain portions of the ranches for **CONSERVATION**. The Rural Planning Area concept was added to state statutes as part of the *Growing Smarter* legislation.

Except in a few limited areas, virtually no farmland is used for commercial production in Coconino County. Fredonia has a few small family farms, the north end of the Timberline-Fernwood area features pumpkin and bean farms, and Oak Creek Canyon has a few apple orchards. Historically, considerable potato and bean farming occurred in the Flagstaff area, but most of these areas have been converted to development.



John Aber



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RURAL PLANNING AREA

An area created by petition of owners of a majority of the property to prepare a plan that emphasizes voluntary, nonregulatory incentives for accommodating the continuation of traditional rural and agricultural enterprises; designated by the Board of Supervisors under ARS §11.806.D.3



Goal: Preserve working ranches, unfragmented landscapes, and the county's natural character.

Policies:

7. The County shall work with property owners using a variety of strategies to maintain working ranches as a viable method of land management to maintain open space and preserve landscape integrity. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINES: B, C, E, F, H, I*
8. Private and state lands in checkerboard areas shall be considered in a regional context in order to preserve unfragmented landscapes and to address environmental concerns. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: A*



Residential

Residential uses fall into five categories: agricultural-residential, **40-ACRE RANCHETTES**, single-family residential, multiple-family, and **MANUFACTURED HOME** parks. Most of the **RURAL** county is zoned for agricultural-residential uses, with minimum lot sizes varying from 1 to 10 acres. This **ZONING** accommodates low-density residential uses, as well as light agricultural uses that are related to rural living. It permits one single-family residence or manufactured home per parcel. Most areas surrounding Flagstaff and Williams

are characterized by agricultural-residential land uses and are zoned for such, with the exception of some platted **SUBDIVISIONS**, the Parks and Mormon Lake areas, and all rural ranchlands. The single-family residential use allows site-built homes and **MODULAR HOMES** but no manufactured homes. Lot size may vary from 5,000 square feet to 5 acres, but most are between 6,000 square feet and 1 acre. Single-family residential areas occur primarily in platted subdivisions such as Mountaineer, most of Kachina Village, Forest Highlands, most of Pinewood, part of Bellemont, Greenthaven, about half of the Blue Ridge area, and Timberline. Multiple-family residential uses occur primarily in incorporated municipalities where water, sewer, and a range of urban services

and facilities are readily available. One notable exception is Tusayan, which contains a number of apartment and dormitory buildings for employees of Grand Canyon National Park and local businesses. Kachina Village also has a few multiple-family duplexes. Manufactured home parks also occur mostly in cities and towns. The approximately 25 parks in the unincorporated county range in size from three units to over 100; all but one are legally **NONCONFORMING**.

Residential **DEVELOPMENT** patterns fall into one of three categories: rural communities, remote subdivisions, and rural, large-parcel agricultural-residential. Rural communities may feature some **NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL** development; they include Doney Park, Parks, Pinewood, Kachina Village, Mountaineer, and Mormon Lake. Like other subdivisions, remote subdivisions are platted and approved, but they are located far from established communities. Many are surrounded by Forest Service land. In the southeast part of the county, examples include Forest Lakes and Clear Creek Pines, Starlight Pines, Mogollon Ranch, Blue Ridge Estates, and Tamarron Pines in the Blue Ridge area. In the western part of the county, Kaibab Estates north of Ash Fork is an example. Most are second homes. Substandard and mostly **UNDEVELOPED** examples include the Grand Canyon subdivision and Clear Air Estates near Valle. Over time, some remote subdivisions will develop and transform from second-home to year-round residences, becoming communities. Rural, large-parcel development occurs mainly in areas with 40-acre lots.

SEE ALSO

PAGE 93

Nonconforming Uses

SEE ALSO

PAGES 72 & 74

Community Character:
Community Design and Rural
Activity Centers



A range of housing choices will continue to be available in the unincorporated county. Development featuring 2½- to 10-acre lots is likely to continue to be most common since a greater level of infrastructure, such as paved roads and community **WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS**, is required for higher densities.

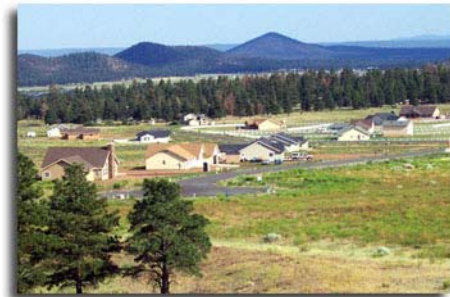
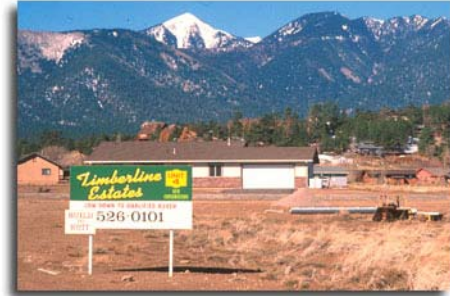
Housing Affordability

The median price of housing in Coconino County doubled between 1987 and 2002. In the Flagstaff area, the median price of a previously occupied three-bedroom house in 2002 was \$185,000; new homes cost about \$100,000 more. Prices are similar in the Blue Ridge and Forest Lakes areas and somewhat lower in the Williams and Ash Fork areas. The median household income at the time of the 2000 Census was \$38,256. Over half of the households in the Flagstaff area cannot afford a median-priced home.

There has been considerable discussion about the County's role in providing **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**. Many factors contribute to the cost of homes. Large lot zoning has resulted in higher land prices, and development costs have increased because easily accessible lands have already been developed. In addition, the cost of installing utilities and infrastructure such as wells and on-site wastewater treatment systems is high. Furthermore, many areas are far from building material suppliers and readily available contractors. The lack of infrastructure for amenities such as water, power, and fire protection tends to support the development of higher density, more affordable housing inside incorporated municipalities where such services are readily available. However, a lack of available land, as well as land prices, are causing developers and those seeking home sites to look outside of cities and towns. Although land in more remote areas can be less costly than land in an established community, the long term costs of utilities, community services, and transportation from a rural location to an urban employment center, for example, can often be greater than any initial savings. In general, the provision of government services becomes more costly as one moves away from developed communities, ultimately decreasing the potential to provide affordable housing in the county.

The County has promoted housing affordability in various ways, such as amending the *Coconino County Subdivision Ordinance* to decrease the minimum required street width and simplify the subdivision process. Other approaches have included encouraging higher densities, clustered subdivisions, and locations for manufactured homes. Potential home buyers can also find help through other programs offered through the **NORTHERN ARIZONA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (NACOG)**, the Affordable Housing Coalition, and the County. These programs offer down payment and mortgage assistance.

Allowing accessory apartments would also help make owner-occupied housing more affordable as well as provide a new base of rental housing. Designing accessory units that are clearly subordinate to the principal dwelling would eliminate the need for a zoning change from single-family residential to duplex. The County allows accessory units for family or guests, but owners cannot rent them.



Subdivisions

Subdivisions are regulated in Coconino County through the *Subdivision Ordinance*, which was first adopted in 1964. Prior to 1964, subdivision plats required approval by the County Engineer, the Health Department, and the **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**. The *Subdivision Ordinance* underwent two major revisions—first, in 1974, when the Board adopted a paving standard for subdivision roads, and again, in 1982, when the entire ordinance was rewritten to vary standards by lot size. The *Subdivision Ordinance* contains three important thresholds. For subdivisions with lot sizes of less than 1 acre, a community **WASTEWATER** system is required. In some cases, smaller lot sizes have been allowed to have on-site systems if gross density is no higher than one unit per acre. For subdivisions with lot sizes less than 5 acres, a community water system is required unless a hydrologist or engineer can demonstrate that every lot owner could successfully drill a well. For subdivisions with lot sizes exceeding 5 acres, no water system is required; water can be hauled. Also, in subdivisions with lot sizes exceeding 2½ acres, owners may request a paving waiver for roads, although approval is not guaranteed.



J. Ernest Jutte

Although the County encourages property owners to go through the subdivision process, it could do more. Standards can be changed; more importantly, the approval process could be streamlined to require less time and effort. In addition, options could be included in the *Coconino County Subdivision Ordinance* and/or *Coconino County Zoning Ordinance* for conservation design.

Lot Splits

LOT SPLIT

A division of land into five or fewer parcels.

40-ACRE LOT DEVELOPMENT

A division of land into parcels of 36 acres or more, designated in the Arizona Revised Statutes as “unsubdivided lands.”

RURAL CHARACTER

The pastoral or rustic setting of a location, as defined by local residents according to their preferences and needs.

State law allows property owners to split property up to five ways without subdivision review and approval;⁶² successive owners can also split until the resulting parcels reach the minimum zoned size. Consequently, many areas are developing through this **LOT SPLIT** (or “land division”) process, which requires minimal roads and utility improvements, rather than through platted and recorded subdivisions. For years, the number of parcels approved through lot splitting has exceeded those approved through the subdivision process.

State law also allows owners to divide land into parcels of 36 acres or more with no County oversight, although they must record a plat and submit a public report. These developments are commonly referred to as **40-ACRE LOT DEVELOPMENTS**. Since current zoning (adopted in 1981) allows for a 10-acre minimum parcel size, each 40-acre lot can be divided into four parcels. These developments contain approximately 3,200 40-acre lots that cover 200 square miles (128,000 acres)—8 percent of the county’s private lands.

Counties have long desired greater control over lot splits so they can address issues related to roads, utilities, and proper drainage, which are often substandard. Residents perceive several advantages to lot-split development: the ability to maintain an area’s **RURAL CHARACTER** and low population density, shorter time frames for approval, and, in some cases, lower initial land costs. Most problems related to lot splits involve roads. Neighbors may feud over easements, maintenance, drainage issues, and traffic. In addition, lot splits often fragment wildlife **HABITAT**, offer no opportunity for preserving **OPEN SPACE**, and disregard topography and other building constraints such as **FLOODPLAINS**.

The County should pursue amending the law or upgrading standards for lot splits. The goals of such changes should be providing decent housing and better **ACCESS** for emergency vehicles, reducing problems related to dust and drainage, and protecting quality of life, ecological integrity, and property values. Options include strengthening road standards, increasing easement widths to allow for proper drainage, requiring road maintenance agreements, and providing incentives for good planning through conservation design.



40-Acre Ranchettes

Ranchers may sell their land for development as 40-acre “ranchettes.”⁶³ This option has become more attractive as ranchers face increasing difficulty in making a living, especially during periods of drought, and as they lose grazing rights on state or federal land. In addition, because state laws make such development easy, a significant number of acres have already been converted. This practice can impact adjacent federal and state lands, especially in **CHECKERBOARD AREAS**. When alternating private sections are developed for residential purposes, the potential for selling the adjacent state sections may increase. The State Land Department has not historically made a practice of selling these sections. However, pressures to do so could mount when these sections no longer generate revenue from grazing leases, when they become difficult to manage, or when the number of access roads to the intervening private sections increases.

Although demand is considerable for certain kinds of 40-acre lots,⁶⁴ this may not be the best use of land. Very low density development over large areas alters wildlife habitat and **MOVEMENT AREAS**. It also causes other environmental problems such as changes to drainages and increased air pollution from dust generated on dirt roads. If all the remaining undeveloped private lands in the county were developed as 40-acre lots, and if the zoning for minimum parcel size remained at 10 acres, about 30,000 of these 40-acre lots could be split into 120,000 lots. At that point, all of the remaining undeveloped private land in the county would be gone. Furthermore, given their distance from established communities, virtually all of these lots would be used for second homes. A much better approach is to offer second home sites that are clustered and smaller in size to accommodate the same number of units with far less land.

Second Homes

The 2000 Census revealed that 17.1 percent of all homes in Coconino County are used for seasonal occupancy. In unincorporated portions of the county, the percentage of second homes is much higher. In Kachina Village and Mountaineer, for example, second homes comprise about one-quarter of all residences; in Pinewood, about 80 percent; and in Blue Ridge and Forest Lakes, nearly 90 percent. As the Phoenix metropolitan area continues to grow, the demand for summer homes will continue to be strong.

Second homes use a significant proportion of the private land base in some areas and require County services despite their seasonal population. Gated communities probably generate more tax revenue than it costs to provide services because they typically supply their own security and road maintenance. However, costs to provide other second-home communities with services such as police protection, solid waste disposal, road maintenance, and snow removal typically exceed tax revenues.

Gated Communities

Approved in 1986, Forest Highlands was the first gated community in the unincorporated county. In 2002, this built-out community included about 820 lots, two 18-hole golf courses, and two clubhouses with swimming pools and other amenities. Flagstaff Ranch Golf Club, approved in 2000, was the second.

Buyers seek gated communities for reasons related to security, sense of place, and unique community features. However, as with most issues, gated communities have pros and cons. They

CHECKERBOARD AREA

An area characterized by a mix of land ownership or land management, often with every other section under different ownership—most commonly, state and private sections.



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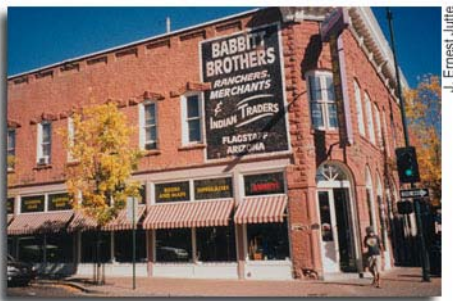


fill a market demand and a market niche. They typically demand a lower level of public services than other types of development. But they also restrict public access to other lands, lack connectivity to other subdivisions, and make connecting to **TRAILS** more difficult. The *Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan* contains a policy to discourage gated communities unless they provide connectivity and public access.

Goal: **Ensure a range of housing alternatives in well-designed communities.**

Policies:

9. The County supports the development of viable opportunities for affordable housing and home ownership, through such means as allowing for manufactured, modular, factory-built homes and accessory rental units.
10. The County encourages design of subdivisions that protect environmentally sensitive portions or special characteristics of the property. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: D*
11. The County encourages alternatives to the conventional pattern of 40-acre lot development, for example by allowing the same number of units as allowed by current zoning but in a more dense development on a portion of the property, or by strategic sales of small portions of the overall property in order to retain ranching on the remainder.
12. The County supports integrated conservation design, clustered subdivisions, and density bonuses in order to preserve portions of the property for shared public or open space. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINES: A, B, C, D, E*
13. The County encourages and supports property owners in the development of legal subdivisions rather than lot splits. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: K*
14. The County favors extremely low density residential zoning for remote areas. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: E*
15. Very low density residential uses shall be maintained in areas without water, utilities, and fire protection.
16. The County supports changes to state law to give counties greater authority over lot splits. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: K*



Commercial

Commercial land uses are scattered throughout the county, typically on or near state highways.⁶⁵ Most can be characterized as **NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL** or tourist/highway commercial. Neighborhood commercial use includes general retail and office facilities, grocery stores, gas stations, restaurants, post offices, and feed stores. Tourist/highway commercial use includes hotels, motels, campgrounds, RV parks, gift shops, and recreational facilities. Convenience stores and some other uses serve both

local residents and tourists. Most regional commercial uses like shopping centers, “big-box” retail establishments, and movie theaters are located in incorporated municipalities.

Residential areas can also feature several categories of commercial land use. One is “Home occupations”—consulting services and other activities that do not draw customers to the place of business. They are secondary to the home’s use as a residence and should be nearly invisible to neighbors. Hundreds of home businesses are scattered throughout the county. The *Zoning Ordinance* also allows cottage industries after a public hearing and approval by the **PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION**. Business may be conducted



in an outbuilding that customers visit. Cottage industries may also have employees. In some cases, the business activity may be somewhat industrial. This not only allows entrepreneurs to combine home and workplace, but it also allows them to start a business that may grow and move to a commercial or industrial area. One advantage of low-density zoning is that, with **MITIGATION**, such uses can operate with minimal impact on neighbors. Some commercial uses that have been approved in unincorporated residential areas include bed-and-breakfast establishments, feed stores, kennels, and recreational facilities.

Future commercial activities in Coconino County are likely to continue to be either neighborhood commercial or highway commercial. The *1990 Comprehensive Plan* and the ten **AREA PLANS** encourage locating commercial development at major intersections and in existing communities; indeed, most commercial land use has evolved at such locations. The *1990 Comprehensive Plan* also strongly discouraged “strip development” along state highways because it promotes inefficient movement and detracts from an area’s visual character. The *Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan* designated several major intersections and commercial areas as **RURAL ACTIVITY CENTERS**, which may include small-scale retail facilities, offices, schools, transit stops, parks or other civic facilities, and other business designed to meet residents’ needs. In most of the unincorporated county, commercial uses serve both residents and tourists. In some locations, however, commercial businesses cater almost exclusively to highway travelers and tourists; in others, they cater almost exclusively to local residents. Considering commercial activity during the development process helps ensure that neighborhood-oriented businesses are convenient to local residents, reducing their need to travel long distances for basic services.

The **RURAL CHARACTER** of low-density residential areas can be best preserved by continuing to encourage mostly neighborhood businesses rather than regional commercial businesses such as shopping malls. The County adopted a *Zoning Ordinance* amendment in 2001 prohibiting retail establishments over 70,000 square feet in rural areas.

Design guidelines for new commercial and industrial uses have been adopted in a number of communities through the Area Plan process. These communities include Tusayan, Doney Park, Oak Creek Canyon, Kachina Village, and Mountainaire. Although the *Fort Valley Area Plan* called for design guidelines, none were developed. Such guidelines can significantly improve the quality of the built environment without severely narrowing architectural choices or increasing costs. Tusayan, in particular, has experienced considerable improvement in the appearance of its commercial core since adopting design criteria.

Goal: **Ensure commercial development that is well-designed and appropriately located within communities and activity centers.**

Policies:

17. Commercial development projects shall be designed in a manner that is compatible with the rural character of the area in which the project is proposed.
18. Future commercial uses shall be located at major intersections and in existing communities and population centers.

SEE ALSO **APPENDIX C**

**County Communities Overview
– Communities With Area Plans**

SEE ALSO **PAGE 74**

**Community Character: Rural
Activity Centers**



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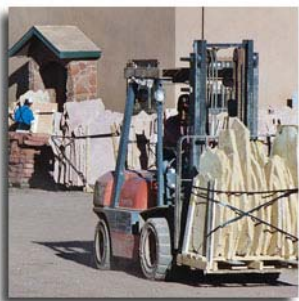
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19. Within defined commercial activity centers, a range of uses shall be supported that are appropriate for each individual location and community, and may include small scale retail, offices, business and personal services, schools, and parks designed to meet the needs of the area.
20. The County supports locally based neighborhood commercial businesses.
21. Regional commercial uses such as shopping malls and large retail establishments are encouraged to locate within incorporated municipalities in order to obtain a full range of urban services.
22. Large resort commercial⁶⁶ uses should only be sited in appropriate locations that can be adequately served by roads, water, sewer and other public facilities and services, and shall be discouraged from locating in remote areas. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: B*
23. In reviewing the environmental impacts of a proposal, the County favors development projects that demonstrate sensitivity to the natural and cultural environment including preservation of views, trees and native vegetation, consideration of wildlife, and conservation of water resources. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINE: B*
24. In order to facilitate efficient and safe traffic movement and to avoid aesthetic problems, strip commercial development is strongly discouraged.
25. Where new commercial or industrial development projects are proposed adjacent to residential areas, adequate buffers shall be required.
26. Rezoning to commercial or industrial shall be discouraged for large tracts of land exceeding the area for which specific uses or site plans have been proposed, and where appropriate, zone changes shall be conditioned on a specific site plan and for specific uses.
27. Design flexibility that results in a mix of compatible land uses is strongly encouraged.
28. The County shall continue to support home occupations and cottage industries that do not intrude on the residential character of neighborhoods.



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Industrial

Because most industrial facilities need municipal water, sewer, fire protection, and other services, they are located within cities and towns. As of 2002, areas of heavy industrial zoning and development were located near Winona (76 acres) and on Leupp Road (242 acres) in the Doney Park area. Facilities included a truss manufacturing plant, auto salvage yards, bulk propane storage, a roofing company, and mining activities. A second industrial area, located just west of Flagstaff on Flagstaff Ranch Road (108 acres), features a bottling distribution center and a solid waste company. Bellemont has a large paper products plant, a cabinet shop, a cultured marble plant, and a printing warehouse. A total of 140 acres are industrially zoned in Bellemont. Considerable additional development is possible at both the Flagstaff Ranch Road and Bellemont locations—preferably including warehouse, distribution, and light manufacturing uses that do not require large amounts of water.

Mining has never had a significant economic impact on Coconino County. Mining activity is confined to sandstone quarries north of Ash Fork and to cinder and materials pits throughout the county. However, many mining claims could be reactivated if markets for certain minerals—such as uranium—improve. Most mining activity occurs on state or federal land. On private land, mining is exempt from County **ZONING**.



Mining outside the county directly impacts us. Coal mined in Navajo County is transported by train to the Navajo Generating Station in Page and used to produce electricity. It is also transported to the Mohave Generating Station in Laughlin, Nevada, through a coal slurry line that crosses the county. Because of complex legal and political issues surrounding the use of **GROUNDWATER** for transporting slurry, a pipeline has been proposed from the Colorado River in Marble Canyon to the coal mines.

Goal: Provide for industrial development that is well-designed and environmentally responsible.

Policies:

29. Because of the importance of protecting the natural environment, especially air and water quality, only clean industries are appropriate.
30. The County shall support industrial development projects in areas that are or could be appropriately zoned and where an adequate level of infrastructure exists.
31. Industrial uses are discouraged along scenic corridors or at community gateways. Site design of commercial uses shall enhance and protect the aesthetic quality of community gateways and scenic corridors.

Nonconforming Uses

A **NONCONFORMING USE** is one that was legal prior to 1964, when the *Zoning Ordinance* was adopted, or it was legal prior to the adoption of an amendment or change in zoning classification. According to state law, nonconforming uses can exist indefinitely. Many nonconforming lots that do not meet current minimum lot sizes were created prior to 1964 or 1981, when a new *Zoning Ordinance* was adopted. These lots are legally entitled to building permits. Every amendment to the *Zoning Ordinance*—all 48 between 1981 and 2002—creates a new set of nonconforming situations. For example, when the ordinance was amended in 1986 to prohibit new billboards, all existing billboards became legally nonconforming. Other nonconforming uses include **MANUFACTURED HOME** parks in single-family residential zones, commercial uses such as RV parks in residential zones, single-family residences in commercial and industrial zones, and manufactured homes in zones that allow only site-built homes.

Nonconforming situations comprise a relatively large number of **PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION** and Board of Adjustment cases. Although such uses are allowed to continue indefinitely, the County issues numerous requests to improve, enlarge, or alter them. And although the *Zoning Ordinance* encourages removing nonconforming uses or bringing them into compliance, this is usually not possible or economically viable. The County's goal is to improve such uses; it also allows for gradually improving nonconforming uses or bringing the property into conformance in stages rather than all at once.

State law also allows nonconforming commercial uses to expand by 100 percent as long as the proposed expansion is on the same property and in the same **ZONING** district. The *Zoning Ordinance* requires a **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT** for such expansions. The conditional use permits are also required to convert one nonconforming use to another nonconforming use that has less impact on the area.

NONCONFORMING USE

A use or activity that was lawful prior to the adoption, revision, or amendment of the *Zoning Ordinance* or applicable zoning classification that does not conform to present requirements.



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Goal: Improve or eliminate the negative impacts of nonconforming uses.

Policies:

32. The County supports the elimination or improvement of nonconforming uses in order to bring properties into conformance and to eliminate land use conflicts.
33. The County supports the conversion of nonconforming uses to legal uses or to other uses that have less impact on the area.
34. Except as allowed by state law, enlargements and alterations that increase the degree of nonconformity are discouraged.

Locally Undesirable Land Uses

LOCALLY UNDESIRABLE LAND USE

A site or facility such as a land-fill, communications tower, or and high-voltage transmission line that constitutes a real or perceived nuisance.

LOCALLY UNDESIRABLE LAND USES (sometimes referred to as “LULUs”) feature facilities such as sanitary landfills, wireless communication towers, and high-voltage transmission lines. Most, if not all, of these facilities are essential for basic economic infrastructure or social purposes; however, these facilities are often considered **NIMBY** sites—as in “not in my back yard.” The County strives to site such facilities in a way that minimizes disturbance and maximizes **MITIGATION** to reduce impacts. For example, the County amended the *Zoning Ordinance* in April 2001 to encourage providers to locate wireless communication facilities in disturbed areas or in areas where towers already exist. The resulting *Wireless Telecommunications Facilities Ordinance* discourages towers in scenic viewsheds and residential areas. Although some land uses (like mining) are exempt under state statute, most undesirable land uses can only be approved through a **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT** and public hearing process.

Goal: Minimize the impacts of locally undesirable land uses on the environment and community character.



Policies:

35. The County shall work closely with applicants for undesirable land uses to minimize the potential impacts on residential areas, rural character and the environment. *SEE CONSERVATION GUIDELINES: B, E, G, H, I*
36. The County promotes better public understanding as to the importance of locally undesirable uses that serve a greater community need.

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

“There is no finer investment for any community than putting milk into babies.”

